

**State of Montana**

**Application**

**STATE ACTION FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROJECT  
(SAELP)**

Submitted by

**Montana Office of Public Instruction**

to

**State Leadership Center, CCSSO**

April 27, 2001

**State of Montana Application for a  
STATE ACTION FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROJECT (SAELP)**

**Introduction: Educational Leadership in Rural States**

In 1998, to document through research the anecdotal evidence about school leader shortages nationally, the National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals commissioned a study to examine the shortage of qualified school leaders. The study examined whether or not there was a shortage of qualified candidates to fill principal openings, the reasons for the absence of qualified candidates, and how and where candidates were being recruited for vacancies. Additionally, the study examined whether qualified women and minorities were applying for principal positions, what efforts local school districts had in place to recruit and prepare future administrators, and how local districts have supported professional development to assist principals.

Using randomly sampled school districts nationally, without regard to community type or school level, research was conducted through a literature review and a telephone survey to answer questions posed by the study. Some important conclusions were drawn about the differences between urban and rural school districts in recruiting and supporting principal candidates (ERS, 1998). Results of the study indicated that a shortage of qualified candidates for principal vacancies existed in the U.S. Approximately half of the superintendents interviewed nationwide reported a shortage of qualified candidates, particularly at the middle and high school levels (55%). The most cited reason given as a barrier to recruiting qualified candidates to principal vacancies was insufficient compensation when compared to the position's responsibilities (60%). Superintendents reported additional barriers that included job stress and the time required for the position. 75% of the superintendents who filled vacancies reported that qualified women applied; however, minority applicants generally looked for positions in urban districts (67% urban, 29% rural). While many urban districts were found to be using aspiring principals programs to recruit new principals (50%), this was not the case in rural areas where only 22% of the districts used aspiring principals programs as a recruitment method. Also, more urban

than rural districts used mentoring programs as a formal induction program for new principals (54% urban, 45% rural).

In the summer of 2000, the Institute for Educational Leadership organized task forces to examine school leadership. From the work of these task forces, a report, *Reinventing the Principalship* (2000) was issued describing the shortage of qualified high-quality principals. Models were devised that task force members believed districts could use to address school leader shortages in their communities. They cited data claiming that the existing principal crisis was likely to worsen by 2005. "Because of a steady rise in the average age of principals in recent years, more than 37 percent were over the age of 50 by the 1993-94 school year, according to the study based on the most recently available federal survey data" (IEL, 2000). Further they say, "These shortages are expected to hit some regions harder than others. For example, a 1999 University of Minnesota study estimated that, by 2010, about 75 percent of Minnesota principals will be lost through retirement or attrition, even as school enrollments are expected to grow by 10 to 20 percent." The report also points out that some school districts are offering unprecedented compensation packages to teachers and an increase of opportunity for leadership positions outside of education as problems in recruiting principals away from teaching positions.

### **A Rural Educational Leadership Perspective**

It is, therefore, critical that the State Action for Education Leadership Project develop data about the crisis of leadership in rural schools and a set of unique solutions that can be generalized to rural schools across the nation.

Issues specific to the school leadership crisis in rural communities were not addressed by these major reports either in data collection or in their recommendations. Thus, the question arises as to whether the national data collected and the resulting recommended solutions to the school leadership crisis are appropriate for the more than 15,000 rural school districts across this nation. (ERS, 1998) It is

critical that the State Action for Education Leadership Project examine data from rural schools and develop solutions that are uniquely suitable for rural schools. The IEL report (2000) recognized that

the leadership crisis could "hit some regions harder than others" (p. 5) and the 1998 principal shortage study acknowledged that "interest had been expressed in developing information about whether the experiences of urban, suburban, and rural districts were similar or different" but left that analysis to future studies (ERS, 1998 p. 5).

The leadership crisis in Montana was documented in a 1999 study commissioned by the Montana School Boards Association in conjunction with the School Administrators of Montana, the Montana Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Committee of the State Board of Public Education, and Montana State University. (See Appendix A) In this study, 118 school board chairpersons, 105 school superintendents, 126 school principals, and 220 teachers, who hold administrative certification but are not seeking positions as school leaders, were questioned about the issues of recruiting and retaining administrators in Montana. Eighty-six percent of the superintendents and school board chairs reported that they had problems in hiring qualified school leaders for vacancies in their districts. They identified the barriers to filling their vacancies as "the pool of applicants was too small, the applicants were not well qualified, the applicants wanted higher salaries, and applicants did not have the desired previous experience" (MSBA, 1999). While the majority reported that they attempted to recruit applicants from within their districts, only 22% reported having any kind of formal recruitment program or strategy. Alarming, 97% of the board chairs and superintendents reported that they did not have any kind of mentoring or formal induction programs in place, yet more than 75% of the practicing principals responded that such a program would have been helpful. Further, it was found that incentives that school leaders would need to remain in the job were not the incentives that board chairs reported offering.

Among the group of teachers qualified to be administrators but who are not in administrative positions, the factors most often mentioned for not applying were, "salary too low for job responsibilities, conflicts with desired life style, place bound (unable to move family) and longer working hours required in the principalship" (MSBA, 1999). Similar to the Minnesota study, the

Montana study predicts a worsening situation since more than 50% of responding superintendents will retire by 2004 to take a similar job out-of-state where pay and benefits are better or to take a job in the private sector. Principals reported having an average of 20 years in the Montana Teacher Retirement System and over 60% plan to retire within the next 10 years to take similar jobs out-of-state or in the private sector.

Indeed, there is a documented crisis in school leadership in Montana with few available solutions. In addition, the 1998 national principal shortage study (ERS, 1998) documented that rural states like Montana are unable to attract minority candidates to the principalship with only 29% of the districts reporting that minorities had applied for principal positions. Additionally, having an aspiring principals program to recruit and prepare candidates was not being used as a strategy in nearly 80% of the rural schools and less than 50% had any formal induction or mentoring programs. Yet, the recommendations from the 2000 Task Force on Reinventing the Principalship identify the recruitment of women and minorities, formal programs to recruit principals from within the district, and strong professional development opportunities for new principals to gain needed skills through mentoring and induction programs as strategies to address the shortage. The question, then, is why are rural schools not using these strategies? Are the strategies not appropriate for rural schools, have they been tried and abandoned, or are rural schools unaware of the recommendations? These questions and recommendations to address the challenges for rural schools will be addressed through Montana's State Action for Education Leadership Project. By selecting Montana to receive funding to design and implement strategies, the SAELP project will contribute to the resolution of the leadership crisis in rural schools.

### **Part 1: State Consortium and Purpose for Participating in SAELP**

#### **Description of the State Consortium**

Montana has developed a State Consortium which involves state education policy makers who are committed to action on school leadership. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Linda

McCulloch, will lead the State Consortium and assume administrative and financial responsibility for the Project. The Consortium has selected Dr. Joanne Erickson, professor of educational leadership at Montana State University, to direct the Project. In partnership with the State Superintendent are the Governor of Montana, Judy Martz; the State Board of Public Education represented by its Executive Director, Wayne Buchanan; the Montana Legislature represented by Representatives Alan Olson (R) and Holly Raser (D) and Senators John Bohlinger (R) and Don Ryan (D); the School Administrators of Montana represented by its Executive Director, Loran Frazier; and the University System represented by the Educational Leadership Program faculty at Montana State University. (See letters of support in Appendix B).

### **Rationale for Inclusion, Role and Responsibility of the Partners in the State Consortium**

The role and responsibilities of the partners making up the Consortium represent the leadership and management of education in Montana. These stakeholder partners are described below. The Consortium agreed that this critical examination of school leadership should be led by the Superintendent of Public Instruction who is elected by the voters of Montana to lead the State's schools. Montana law charges the Superintendent to "faithfully work in all practical and possible ways for the welfare of the public schools of the state." (MCA 20-3-105 [11], 1999) As a shortage of school leaders has been identified as a major crisis facing the welfare of Montana schools, the Superintendent is obligated to address this crisis through her office and by her leadership.

The State Board of Public Education recognized the impending crisis several years ago and participated in commissioning the 1999 study to examine the shortage of school administrators in Montana. The Board has authority for setting expectations and requirements for professional leadership practice through the development of standards for school leaders and licensure criteria. Additionally, the Board has authority to establish academic standards for Montana's students and has just concluded adopting new, rigorous content standards. At a time when new and higher standards are being implemented, the Board recognizes the critical role of school leaders who will develop priorities

for teaching and learning and have the characteristics and qualities necessary to lead schools to high levels of achievement for all students.

Legislators with a keen interest and important policy setting responsibilities for Montana schools are essential to the work of the Consortium if new policies are to be implemented statewide. Representing the Montana Legislature are two members of the House and two members of the Senate, representing each major political party. Representative Alan Olson sits on the House Education Committee and is in a key position to focus legislative attention on school leadership. Representative Holly Raser brings a clear understanding of rural communities to the Consortium from her seat on the influential Agriculture Committee in a state that is largely rural and dominated by an agricultural economy. Senators John Bohlinger and Don Ryan are both sitting members of the Senate Education Committee. Additionally, Senator Ryan represents business and labor on the Business and Labor committee and will bring that needed economic perspective to the Consortium. While each of these individuals has multiple commitments to the Legislature, their local constituents and communities, and to their work and families, they have agreed to participate in designing solutions to resolve the school leadership crisis in Montana.

The Governor of Montana, Judy Martz, declared education as one of the top priorities of her administration. She has endorsed the State accountability system put in place to ensure that all students in Montana's schools meet and exceed high standards. Governor Martz recognizes the importance of quality teachers and school leaders in sustaining high performing schools and bringing lower performing schools up to State standards. In her State of the State Address, Governor Martz described the crisis in staffing our schools by saying, "...every day we lose outstanding teachers and administrators to other states that offer better pay and benefits." Her comments in this most important public arena reflect her concern and commitment to address the administrative and teacher shortage problems in Montana. Participation in the Consortium by the top elected official of the State will lend importance to the development of a strategy to address the crisis in school leadership in Montana.

School Administrators of Montana (SAM) must be involved in the improvement of practice of school leaders. It is critical that school leaders work with key State policy makers in developing new ways to practice leadership and to establish new reform initiatives in the policies and standards that govern their profession. The persons responsible for implementing new policies must be a meaningful part of the decision-making partnership in the Consortium if they are to have ownership of the solutions. The School Administrators of Montana is the umbrella organization representing the Montana Association of School Superintendents, the Montana Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals, and the Montana Association of Secondary School Principals.

Finally, the University System is responsible for pre-service and professional development and training of school administrators. The Montana State University Educational Leadership Program not only prepares principals and superintendents for Montana schools, it is instrumental in ongoing professional development through its annual Principal's Academy. The University's preparation program in educational leadership is driven by ISLLC standards and is NCATE accredited. The role of the University partners to the Consortium will be to help identify and examine alternative paths to principal and superintendent licensure that are equal to or exceed standards required for school leadership. Dr. Joanne Erickson of Montana State University served on the initial committee to examine the issues of retaining and attracting quality school administrators in Montana and subsequently conducted the 1999 Study of the Shortage of School Administrators in Montana (MSBA).

### **Description of the Ways the State Consortium will be Advised by Education, Business and the Community to Develop the Implementation Plan**

During the first month of the Project, the State Consortium membership will expand with representation from the Montana Ambassadors, a body of business leaders appointed by the Governor to create economic development strategies that strengthen the State economy. The Montana Ambassadors have recognized the importance of quality education in economic development and have



noted as a part of their strategic plan the relationship between their work and that of education.

Representation from this body will help the Consortium establish implementation strategies that will not only strengthen schools but will also strengthen communities and the State as a whole.

Additionally, at least four local schools selected as demonstration sites will join the Consortium as full partners in planning for new policies and strategies that they will pilot. If these schools are to have ownership of new strategies and policies that they will be expected to implement, their voices must be part of the initial deliberations. Teacher and parent voices are also critical to the workings of the Consortium. The Montana Education Association (MEA) and the Montana Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) are important partners to decisions that effect schools. Representation from MEA and PTA rounds out the Consortium and will provide leadership from State education decision-makers, school administrators, teachers, parents, universities, local school districts, businesses, and communities. These new partners will be recruited early in the Design Phase of the grant and will participate as full decision-makers in the development of the Implementation Plan. The Consortium will number fewer than 20 individuals and will be able to function effectively as a group to make decisions and establish priorities for the development of an Implementation Plan.

### **Description of the Process that will be Used to Develop an Implementation Plan**

The process for the development of the Implementation Plan involves using data to inform decisions. The Project Director will lead project staff in conducting a comprehensive data collection effort about existing policies and practices that influence school leadership in the State of Montana. The staff will also conduct a thorough review of existing research on school leadership. A discrepancy analysis will be conducted to identify gaps between existing Montana policies and practices, and best practices identified from the literature. Identifying these gaps will enable the Consortium to focus on problems of school leadership in Montana's schools and develop appropriate solutions that can be implemented in Montana's rural schools. The identified problems and related strategies for solutions will become the basis of the Montana Implementation Plan for Education Leadership. The Project

Director and staff will prepare the Implementation Plan for submission for Project funding by the required deadline. The Project Director has the resources of the University System to support data collection, analysis, and reporting.

### **The Goals and Purpose of the State Project**

The goals of the Montana State Action for Education Leadership Project are to:

- Develop a powerful consortium of key policy leaders to begin the conversation and examination of school leadership in Montana.
- Develop a plan for implementing new legislative and/or administrative policies to strengthen the leadership of principals and superintendents in Montana.
- Prepare an Implementation Plan that outlines specifically how the State will go about creating and putting in place the new legislative or administrative policies, practices, and strategies designed in phase 1.
- Serve as a nationwide model for rural schools in creating strategies that work in rural schools to strengthen school and district leadership.

### **Sustainability**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Governor are both newly elected to four-year terms of office. The Board of Public Education is appointed by the Governor and has stability in membership. Three of the four legislators were newly elected in November, thus they have seven years before they are term-limited out. Senator Ryan was elected for a four-year term and representatives Olson and Fraser were elected in November for two-year terms. Senator Bohlinger is in his first term as a Senator; his term expires in December 2002. He can run for a second four-year term. These key officials will be able to see this Project through its completion in 2003. More important, however, is the consideration of whether the changes initiated by this proposal will be sustained beyond the life of the grant. Members of the Consortium have the authority and power to effect change. Equally important is that data and study inform the decisions of the Consortium so that solutions presented in the Implementation Plan are workable and appropriate for Montana's rural schools.

## **Part 2 - Comprehensive Approach to State Strategies**

### **The SAELP Six Key Strategy Areas**

Based on extensive research of how State policies can more effectively attract, sustain, and support education leaders, six key areas that any comprehensive leadership improvement effort must include were identified. They include:

- State Priorities for and Approaches to School Leadership
- The Candidate Pool
- Education and Professional Learning
- Licensure, Certification, and Program Accreditation
- Conditions of Professional Practice
- Authority for Practice and Governance Structures

A description of how Montana would prepare an Implementation Plan to establish new State legislation and/or administrative policies for each of the six strategies follows:

#### **1. State Priorities for and Approaches to School Leadership**

##### **Data collection, research, and analysis**

An analysis of existing legislation and administrative policy for school leadership will be examined. The level of effectiveness of such policy and legislation will be assessed. This examination will reveal how the State *defines* educational leadership and determine whether quality *statewide standards and assessments* for school leaders are in place. Further, it will be determined how *excellence in school leadership is recognized* and rewarded by the State. The analysis will allow the Consortium to determine whether practices expected of principals and superintendents in our State are *related* to statewide strategies for the improvement of teaching and learning, including the State's effort to set high standards for student achievement and teacher quality, and the State's accountability system. This field research effort will allow the Consortium to understand how *leadership is distributed* among all adults that are part of the school community and *how information about the vision, purpose, and progress of the school is communicated among all leaders and stakeholders*.

The existing State priority for, and approach to, school leadership needs to be compared to policies and practices found in other states and identified in the literature review that have been related to strengthening school leadership. When Montana's policies and practices are found by the Consortium to be wanting and specific problems can be identified, the Consortium will devise strategies for new, more effective policies and practices and develop specific plans for implementation. These policies, practices, and implementation strategies will become the basis of the Implementation Plan.

### **The Management Plan Framework for Strategy 1**

<b>Work to be done</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Analysis of existing policy, legislation	Review of documents	Project Staff	June-August
Examination of how the State defines school leadership (management vs. leadership)	Interview key policy-makers, stakeholders	Project Staff	June-August
Examine existing standards and assessment for school leadership	Review of documents	Project Staff	June-August
Determine how excellence in leadership is defined (link to improved teaching and learning)	Interview key policy-makers, stakeholders	Project Staff	June-August
Relationship between leadership reforms and other school reform efforts	Review of documents and interview	Project Staff	June-August
Determine how leadership is distributed in schools	Survey local districts	Project Staff	June-August
Determine how information about school effectiveness and goals is communicated	Survey local districts, review documents	Project Staff	June-August
Identify State resources assigned to enhance leadership environments	Review of documents	Project Staff	June-August
Comparison of Montana data, effort to other states and to the literature	Discrepancy Analysis	Project Staff	August
Identification of the problem(s) of school leadership	Retreat	Consortium	September
Development of strategies through policy development to address problems	Retreat	Consortium	September-October

## **2. The Candidate Pool**

Montana implemented a statewide Principal Intern Program eight years ago to address the emerging shortage of school principals in very rural schools. The plan known as the "OPI (Office of Public Instruction) Internship" is designed to permit districts to internally recruit highly motivated

individuals into leadership positions. The intern is given a waiver of certification for three years, during which time he/she can perform all duties and functions of a principal in the school without jeopardizing accreditation. The intern completes the formal principal preparation program during this time. The principal is assisted with careful mentoring from three sources: the university, a local administrator, and the state professional association. The intern is paid full salary and, while it is not required, most districts pay for the intern's university costs. A formal networking and induction program has been established by the state principal associations to support the intern. The State supports the "OPI Internship" through its policy to provide waivers of certification and accreditation for three years.

In the Montana Study of Shortage of School Administrators (MSBA, 1999) (See Appendix A), 64% of school board chairs and 75% of superintendents interviewed favored an expansion of the OPI Intern Program to help with the principal shortage. This current initiative can be expanded and improved to help address the administrative shortage. Research has been conducted regarding the effectiveness of the OPI Internship. This research suggests the need to improve mentoring. The Consortium will examine existing research on the OPI Internship and develop strategies to improve and expand the model.

The Study of Shortage of School Administrators in Montana (MSBA, 1999) documented that nearly 400 teachers hold administrative certification but are not seeking administrative positions. The Consortium will not only examine strategies for attracting qualified teachers into the principalship, but will also examine strategies to attract those who are currently certified into positions of school leadership. This will require an analysis of the reasons why certified individuals are not moving out of the classroom into leadership positions. An examination of hiring policies and their impact on school leadership will be included in the analysis of the candidate pool. Hiring authority is placed with local districts but State certification policies, legal limitations of the term of contracts, and other policies

may be barriers to local districts selecting qualified candidates. Once an analysis of current policy and practice is completed, the Consortium will clarify the problems and create strategies to address them.

### **The Management Plan Framework for Strategy 2**

<b>Work to be done</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Analyze OPI Internship for effectiveness and expansion	Interview policy-makers, boards, superintendents Review existing research	Project staff	June-August
Develop policy and procedures to improve and expand OPI internship	Retreat	Consortium	September
Identify barriers in attracting administratively certified teachers into school leadership positions	Examine 1999 survey data, literature review	Consortium	September
Develop strategies to address problem	Retreat	Consortium	September
Examine State policies and rules related to hiring procedures for school leaders	Review of documents and best practice in other states	Project staff	June-August
Develop policies and practices to address barriers in overall design of hiring process	Discrepancy analysis and Retreat	Consortium	September

### **3. Education and Professional Learning**

Pre-service preparation for school leaders is conducted at Montana State University and the University of Montana. Preparation programs are based on NCATE, ISLLC, and State standards. The standards present a common core of knowledge, disposition, and performances to ensure effectiveness. No assessments exist to receive administrator certification other than those imposed by the Universities. There are no statewide policies or practices for first year induction or mentoring. The only differentiated certification is the OPI Internship available to principals (described above) and provisional superintendent certification. There are no statewide training or assessment centers.

Continuous professional development is conducted predominantly by the School Administrators of Montana (SAM). This umbrella group includes the Montana Association of School Superintendents, the Elementary/Middle School Principals Association, and the Secondary School Principals Association and is either member-funded or funded by local districts. In collaboration with

SAM, Montana State University offers a Principal's Academy and the State of Montana has applied for a Gates Foundation Grant to conduct leadership training. There are certification mandates requiring continuous development for school leaders. The Consortium will examine existing opportunities available for pre-service and continuous professional development for school leaders, examine how the State authorizes and funds these opportunities, examine best practice from other states and from the literature, and determine if additional policies and practices are needed to improve pre-service and continuous professional development of school leaders.

### **Management Plan Framework for Strategy 3**

<b>Work to be done</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Analysis of existing pre-service education for leaders	Examine programs, standards and effectiveness	Universities, project staff	June-August
Comparison of Montana pre-service to best practice	Literature review, research, and discrepancy analysis	Project staff	June-August
Research leader assessment practices found to be effective in other states	Literature review	Project staff	June-August
Analysis of existing professional development opportunities	Interview and document review	Project staff	June-August
Comparison of Montana pre-service, professional development, assessment opportunities to best practice	Literature review, research, and discrepancy analysis	Project staff	June-August
Development of policy and strategies to address problems in pre-service and professional development opportunities	Retreat	Consortium	September-October

#### **4. Licensure, Certification, and Program Accreditation**

State policy governs both initial and renewal licensing of principals and superintendents. The State has adopted certification standards that provide a profile of the qualities, skills, and abilities that are necessary to school leadership. The certification standards are periodically reviewed, but are not fully aligned with national standards or NCATE standards. The State also accredits the University programs that train school administrators in conjunction with NCATE. In addition, there are two alternate routes to certification available to school leaders in Montana, the OPI Internship and

provisional certification for Superintendents discussed above. The OPI Internship has been carefully designed and research has demonstrated its effectiveness, although it still needs some modification and the existing shortage calls for program expansion. The superintendent provisional certification is a temporary certification waiver and is designed to allow the superintendent candidate three years to meet state requirements for certification but is not supported by State funding. Candidates are left to their own resources to meet State requirements within the three-year period. There are no alternative provisions for candidates from non-teaching backgrounds to become certified. The lack of certification requirements that are reciprocal with other states is a significant barrier to attracting school leaders to Montana. There are no alternative paths for competency-based assessment to receive certification.

The Consortium will undertake a study of existing practice for certification and accreditation and will compare existing practice with best practice found in other states and in the literature. Based on the discrepancies discovered, the Consortium will develop policies to help attract and prepare school leaders for Montana.

#### **The Management Plan Framework for Strategy 4**

<b>Work to be done</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Analyze existing certification requirements	Review of documents	Project Staff	June-August
Conduct a review of best practice and compare to existing practice	Literature review, research Discrepancy analysis	Project Staff	June-August
Analyze existing program accreditation requirements for training programs	Review of documents	Project Staff	June-August
Conduct a review of best practice and compare to existing practice	Literature review, research and discrepancy analysis	Project Staff	June-August
Determine the problems with certification and program accreditation	Retreat	Consortium	September
Develop new policies to address the problems	Retreat	Consortium	September-October



## **5. Conditions of Professional Practice**

Montana, like many rural states, is a strong local control state. Administrative contracts, salary and pension programs, performance review procedures and criteria, incentives, or sanctions are all locally controlled by each school board. Currently, professional associations have offered guidance for superintendent contracts and performance review procedures and criteria; however, no statewide policies exist to guide these important conditions of practice. Because of Montana's history of strong local control, the Consortium will be unlikely to develop policies that would impose State control on professional practice; however, the Consortium could develop guidelines that would be helpful to local districts in improving the conditions of the practice of school leadership in an effort to attract and retain quality professionals.

### **The Management Plan Framework for Strategy 5**

<b>Work to be done</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Examine existing conditions of professional practice including bargaining policies, salary and benefit programs, performance reviews, incentives, sanctions	Interview with school administrative organizations and survey of local schools	Project staff	June-August
Compare existing practice with best practice	Literature review and discrepancy analysis	Project staff	June-August
Develop guidelines to address conditions of professional practice	Retreat	Consortium	September-October

## **6. Authority for Practice and Governance Structures**

As described earlier, Montana is a strong local control state. However, the State has implemented statewide content and performance standards for Montana's students and has adopted a statewide accountability system. Structural patterns within Montana's school districts varies widely with some principals having significant site-based authority and decision-making responsibility while others have very little. Many new structural patterns for school governance are being tested in other states; however, Montana has yet to adopt legislation for Charter Schools, mandated parent councils, site-based management, or school improvement planning processes. The Consortium will examine existing school governance structures to determine which models have been effective in enhancing

instructional leadership and school improvement, particularly in low performing schools. This analysis will lead to the development of strategies which could be in the form of guidelines or policies that will impact the desirability of a leader's work and student achievement.

### **Management Plan Framework for Strategy 6**

<b>Work to be done</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Examine existing governance structures for schools	Survey and interviews with local leaders and board members	Project staff	June-August
Compare existing governance structures to determine most effective of existing models	Analyze model and student achievement	Project staff	June-August
Compare existing governance structures to best practice	Literature review and discrepancy analysis	Project staff	June-August
Create strategies, policies or guidelines to enhance governance structures of schools	Retreat	Consortium	September-October

### **Evaluation of Effectiveness of New Policies, Practices, and Guidelines**

The Consortium will design a comprehensive assessment model to collect data about the effectiveness of any new policies, practices, and guidelines put in place as they implement strategies to address the issues discussed above. This assessment process will provide ongoing assessment (formative) that will identify needed adjustments and modifications of the plan. Data will also be collected and analyzed to determine if, as a result of this project, school leadership has been strengthened and if student achievement has improved. The Project Director will have the responsibility to design and conduct the evaluation.

### **Equitable Distribution of Qualified Leaders**

The Study of the Shortage of School Administrators in Montana (MSBA, 1999) (Appendix A) did not address the shortage of women and minorities in school leadership. Additionally, the 1999 study did not permit an examination of school leadership patterns in low achieving schools vs. higher achieving schools (turnover, satisfaction, barriers, etc.). Thus, the 1999 survey needs to be updated and modified to include an examination of issues for women and minorities in school leadership. With that data, the Consortium could determine if women and minorities have equitable opportunities to

become school leaders; what, if any, barriers exist for women and minorities; and if they are represented in low achieving districts. The Consortium will then develop strategies to attract, support, and sustain women and minorities in school leadership positions.

Montana has developed a model designed to attract and train women and minorities to fill school leadership vacancies in a low performing district serving minority students that will be examined for potential support and expansion. In its implementation, nine women and minority candidates have been recruited to leadership positions in a district with very high numbers of low achieving students. The model used an Academy format that insured resolution of barriers and greater support to the participants. Using this existing model, the Consortium will examine supportive policies and structures that would support the expansion of the model to recruit high quality women and minorities in other low performing districts with high proportions of minority students.

### **Research and Analysis to Inform the Implementation Plan**

Throughout the discussion of the six strategies, the State's plan to examine existing practices and compare those practices with best practices found in other states and through literature review is presented. For each strategy, current policy and practice will be examined; existing data collection efforts will be expanded and updated, including demographic data and the status of women and minorities; and, leadership in low achieving schools by updating and expanding the statewide 1999 Study of Shortage of School Administrators in Montana. (See Appendix A) Finally, best practice will be determined through careful study of effective practices in other states and from a comprehensive literature review. When gaps are found between existing practice and best practice through discrepancy analysis, solutions will be developed to address those gaps. The research and analyses will be directed by the Project Director at Montana State University and supported by project staff. The research effort will result in information that will drive decisions by the Consortium when they gather in a retreat format in early September, and once again in early October. Montana State University has committed office space, computer and related equipment to support this project.

### **Part 3: Local District and School Demonstration Projects**

Four local District Demonstration Project sites will be established to pilot the implementation strategies to ensure that the new policies and strategies can be incorporated and will translate successfully into practice. The criteria for selection of the four District Demonstration Project sites are:

1. The superintendent or a board member must be available to participate as an equal member of the Consortium during the design phase and into the implementation phase of the Project.
2. The districts must represent the demographics of the State in size and region.
3. At least one district must have high numbers of minority and low achieving students.
4. The district must commit in writing to serve as pilot for the SAELP understanding that the commitment extends beyond the life of the grant (beyond 2003).
5. The district must have the capacity to, or interest in, developing the capacity to generate the data needed to appropriately assess the effectiveness of the strategies and policies.
6. The district must be willing to participate in the dissemination of the results of the Project.

### **Part 4: State Project Administration and Budget**

The grant will be administered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), which will have financial responsibility and accountability for the State Project. The Project Director will be Dr. Joanne Erickson from Montana State University (MSU). OPI will develop a letter of agreement that appropriately transfers the coordination of the activities and work to MSU, together with the authority to hire and supervise staff, conduct research, and prepare materials for the Consortium. The Project Director will be responsible for the day-to-day work of the grant and will direct staff, ensure timelines are met, and prepare all reports. The Consortium will be led by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Linda McCulloch, and will be responsible for using the research and data collected by the project staff to make informed decisions regarding the identification of problems and the development

of solutions, policies, and strategies. The Project Director and her staff will be responsible for conducting a formative and summative evaluation of the Project.

**Project Budget**

<u>PERSONAL</u>	
Project Director .....	10,000
Project Staff (survey development and data analysis).....	7,000
Benefits .....	3,500
<u>OPERATIONS</u>	
Contract, Project Staff (research) .....	18,000
Contract (clerical).....	1,000
Travel (in-state) .....	1,000
Supplies (paper, printing, postage).....	1,000
Two Consortium retreats .....	1,000
<u>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS</u> .....	42,500
<u>INDIRECT COSTS (15%)</u> .....	7,500
<u>TOTAL BUDGET</u> .....	\$50,000

**APPENDIX A**

**A Study of the Shortage of School Administrators in  
Montana**

**Executive Summary**

## **APPENDIX B**

# **Letters of Support**